Bible & Daily Living

The way God planned it

By WILLIAM L. TRIMYER
The Way God Planned It
Lesson for November 15, 1981
Bible Study Passage: I Cor. 13:1-13

INTRODUCTION

". . . and I will tell you of a more excellent way." With this Paul speaks to the Corinthian church and makes some of his profoundest statements about love. Chapter 13 of I Corinthians is often referred to as Paul's love poem. This is not far wrong, for Paul describes love as the greatest achievement of the human spirit.

The kind of love that Paul describes is that love (agape) which gives freely. Agape love is charity love that flows freely and without strings. Too often our love is conditional, that is, if someone pleases us then we will bestow our love and affection upon them.

To love someone is to affirm them as persons and to expect nothing in return for our love. When love is offered with strings attached it ceases to be love. Love that expects certain returns is not love. Such love is manipulation or based upon unreasonable expectations. Love cannot be coerced or legislated. It must come freely from the heart.

Love Of The Highest Order [I Cor. 13:1-3]

Paul affirms that gifts are useless without the companion of love. Speaking in tongues is of no consequence when there is no love. Even preaching which does not emphasize grace and love is bound to fall upon deaf ears. Some pulpits scourge the congregation and preach only judgment and damnation. Preaching which threatens and has no love in it will more than likely drive people further from the kingdom.

Paul also talks about intellectual snobbery. Knowledge without love soon treats persons as objects rather than as subjects. We can possess enormous book learning, but if we cannot love, what good does such knowledge accomplish?

And what good is faith without love? There is much today that passes for church and religion but is not charitable or loving. Certain religious persons and religious expressions tend to be judgmental or self-centered.

Paul also acknowledges that notion that charity giving may be done by some without love. Too often in the church we practice goal-giving rather than love-giving. Some people give out of a sense of duty rather than out of a deep desire to share lovingly.

Love That Spares Not [I Cor. 13-4-7]

Paul emphasizes the things that love does not do in verses 4-7. While love is patient and kind, love "envies not, does not boast, does not behave spitefully, does not insist on its own way, is not easily provoked, does not keep score of wrongs, and finds no joy in evil-doing" (author's paraphrase.)

Love always seeks a positive expression. Love "enjoys truth, endures anything, is completely trusting, never ceases to be hopeful, and bears all hardships" (author's paraphrase).

Love that is operative seeks the highest welfare of the person. The greatest example of love at its highest is that of Jesus. Christ was and is love incarnated, the embodiment of love as expressed by the God who loves so willingly that he sends the Son to offer us life at its most abundance.

Love As Supreme [I Cor. 13:8-13]

Life has a temporary ring to it. Everything and everyone has a point of termination. Movies have endings, novels have endings, vacations have endings, and life itself terminates in time. In time man made-edifices decay, crumble and must be replaced. The passing of time brings about the destruction and wasting away of all human endeavors.

But all is not bleak. Paul identifies that only three things live on with any sense of endurance-faith, hope and love. And then Paul says, ". . . but the greatest of these is love." This does not mean that faith and hope are not important, but that without love there can be no faith or hope.

Faith without love tends to be cold and callous, and hope without love is bleak. Love is like a spark that ignites the fires of faith and hope.

Dr. Trimyer is Chaplain at Burnham Hospital in Champaign, Illinois (WLYP).

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The Pastor Speaks

Living Is Caring
Matthew 9:35-38

This idea that Living is Caring came to me recently from our three-year old granddaughter. She was visiting us, and on the front of her blouse were those three important words, and when those three words are placed together into a sentence, they become all the more important. Basically, living is caring and caring is living! The above scripture reads that when "Jesus saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion."

Did you see the recent film on television which told the story of an actual experience which occurred in New York City? A young woman, who had come home from work late in the evening, was attacked and stabbed. She cried out for help; the attacker ran, but he came back shortly for a second and a third time. Finally, he killed the young woman. Thereafter, it was learned that a total of 38 people had witnessed the attack, but they could care less; not one of them tried to save the woman! Perhaps this is the kind of world we live in. Have we become a care-less world indeed?

Of course, there are those people who honestly care: school teachers, social workers, doctors, numerous volunteers for the Red Cross, Scouts, church work. And those who really care are alive to life in the truest sense. When we care about people, their needs and their concerns, we are servant to our world and life is discovered in servanthood.

Perhaps we need to be reminded that caring is the very essence of Christianity. God Himself so cared; He so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son! And this Christ of God moved among men and women in His days on this earth as He was moved with compassion for them. This scriptural word **compassion** literally means "suffering", so Jesus Christ looked with suffering upon people. He moved toward people and got under the load with them and suffered with them.

And to care is the essential mark of the New Testament church, as it is today. Christ's church must be all of us who would follow Christ. If you feel a bit dead inside, why not try this cure: find someone who needs you and demonstrate your care for that someone. I promise you that life will come again. Be moved with compassion even as our Lord was and is.

Church plans supper

The Gladstone Memorial Baptist Church located in Gladstone, Virginia, will have a Thanksgiving Supper on November 22 at 6:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall of the Church. The church also proudly announces the Concert by the "Patihlighters" of the College Hill Baptist Church, Lynchburg, Va. as the guests for the evening. After the supper, the "Pathlighters" will be giving a musical concert for the church.

Everyone is cordially invited to Gladstone for the evening of food and fine felhowship.

Promise Land news

The second Sunday worship service was very inspiring. Rev. Davis delivered the morning message, and the chancel choir rendered beautiful music under the direction of Miss Mabel Hamlett. Many members, visitors, and friends were present.

The Green Spring Baptist Church Senior Choir will be in concert at Promise Land Baptist Church on Sunday, Nov. 15, at 3:00 p.m. Benefit of the Chancel Choir. We're asking the members and the public to please support this program.

The Chancel Choir of Promise Land is having a Queen and King Rally for the benefit of the Building Fund of the church. We're asking everyone to help and sponsor the young people.

Let us continue to pray for the sick and shut-in.

Pastor Day set

Pastor Day will be observed this Sunday at the Mt. Hebo Baptist Church, Dillwyn, during their regular 11:30 a.m. worship service.

Sermon title for the day, "Your Blessings are not on this Side."

The public is cordially invited to attend.

The Rev. Raymond H. Turner is their very fine pastor.

Mass planned

Mass is celebrated each Sunday at 11:30 a.m. at Our Lady of Peace Roman Catholic Church at the Oakville School Building on Highway 26.

C.C.D. classes will be held at 10:30 a.m. on November 15 at the school.

Christmas Cantata practice will be after mass for one hour.

The pastor is Father Albert Pereira, P. O. Box 96, Hurt, Va. 24563; phone 324-4824.

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AARP to meet

On Nov. 17 the Pamplin chapter of American Association of Retired Persons will meet at the Pamplin Charge United Methodist Church at 12:00 noon. There will be nominating of new officers and a pot luck luncheon.

The group will then be entertained by our most outstanding talented trio of Appomattox County. The trio is named "Two Dukes and a Duchess" and performs to everyones delight. Since their performance at the "Railroad Festival" they have been very much in demand.

The chapter invites any and all that might wish to be present to enjoy the program.

Gospel singers to perform

The Heavenly Gospel Singers of Phenix, Va., will be singing at the Chestnut Grove Baptist Church in Appomattox on Sunday, Nov. 15, at 1 p.m.

The event is sponsored by the Young Adult Choir.

The public is invited to come out and listen to some good singing.

A PLAY, DIVIDE AND MULTIPLY, presented by the Family Service of Central Virginia, Inc. a United Way Agency, was given on November 2 at the Memorial United Methodist Church, sponsored by the Appomattox Woman's Club and the Appomattox Junior Woman's Club Health and Mental Health Committee. Shown above are (standing, left,) Midge Coward, (seated) Martha Showalter, and Val Lynch; (standing rear) are Karen Alger and Jow Lawrence. The Family Service of Central Virginia provides Counseling, individual, marital, family or group and Family Life Education.

Conference set

The 115th session of the Lynchburg District conference of the United Methodist Church will convene Sunday, November 15, 2:30 p.m., at Fort Hill Church in Lynchburg.

The Rev. H. Hasbrouck Hughes, Jr., Lynchburg District Superintendent, will preside at the conference which includes pastors and lay representatives from the 96 United Methodist Churches in Lynchburg and six area counties. Total membership in these churches is 21,000.

Guest speaker for the conference will be Dr. James C. Logan, professor of Systematic Theology, Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D. C.

Other agenda items will focus on the special ministries of churches in transitional communities, with particular emphasis on Trinity Church, Lynchburg, which is among several pilot projects in similar communities in Virginia. Also, emphasis will be given to the growing number of women clergy and the vital role they play in the United Methodist ministry.

Special music will be under the direction of Mr. Roger C. Dowdy, organist-choirmaster of the Fort Hill Church.

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